

Presentation at the First Plenary Meeting  
of the Advisory Committee on Acoustic  
Impacts on Marine Mammals  
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Mammals.*

# **Concerns regarding sound sources associated with marine noise pollution internationally**

**MMC Advisory Committee on Acoustic  
Impacts on Marine Mammals**

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# Introduction to WDCS

## International and Australasia

- WDCS, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, is the global charity dedicated to the protection of cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) and their environment
- History of the noise pollution issue and WDCS





# Nature and extent of sound sources

- Military activities
- Seismic (and other oil and gas development, extraction and decommissioning)
- Shipping throughout the oceans
- Large scale ocean research projects



# Nature and extent of sound sources

Sound sources that are much more limited in range:

- Fisheries devices on nets and aquaculture facilities
- Whale and dolphin watching from the water
- Marine wind farms





# Intentional use of sound

- Using sound as a mitigation tool to detect marine mammals
- Research to increase our scientific knowledge of marine mammals & potential impacts



# Lack of data on marine mammals and habitats

- Distribution, abundance, biology & ecology
- National and regional status of populations





# Some domestic legislation outside of the US

- **Australia** – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (out to 200nm, but global for Australian citizens)
- **EU** – Habitats and Species Directive 1992 (out to 200nm)
- **England/Scotland** - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (out to 12nm)





# Some environmental legislation outside the US

Industry	UK Reg'd	UK Self	Australia Reg'd	Australia Self	SO Reg'd	SO Self
O&G	X		X		-	
Military		X	X	X	*	*
Shipping		X		X		X
Fisheries		X		X		X
WW and tourism		X		X		X
Ocean Research		?	X		*	*
CEEs & playbacks		?	X		*	*

\* Depends on national legislation if a member of the Antarctic Treaty System

# Environmental legislation

**In the countries that I have discussed, we lack:**

- Comprehensive environmental legislation to tackle noise pollution issues
- A long term commitment to dedicated and coordinated research
- Appropriate mechanisms for protection including MPAs and cetacean critical habitat
- Full, independent and consultative assessment
- Expert cetacean advice in the policy process





# Environmental legislation

**We cannot effectively assess:**

- Compliance
- Use of the precautionary principle in areas of uncertainty
- Coordination, release and consolidation of research





# Research

Where possible, studies should be:

- Benign, passive and specifically targeted to answer a predefined set of questions
- Independent, non-aligned and peer reviewed studies
- Coordinated with appropriate legislation to ensure long term protection



# A holistic approach including international policy decisions

- Efforts must take place both within domestic jurisdictions and internationally
- Consistency is required in policy decisions
- A combination of studies will be best put to use if coordinated





# In Conclusion

- We welcome the Advisory Committee
- We need to coordinate efforts to fill data gaps
- Research must be well funded & ongoing
- Legislation failure outside of the US is a major impediment to progress
- United effort is needed

